United Nations S/2016/296

Security Council

Distr.: General
4 April 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 30 March 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the period from 19 November 2015 to 29 February 2016 (S/2016/242):

1. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that it is committed to its obligations under the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and has accordingly respected the mandate of UNDOF and facilitated its work in every way. For over four decades, for as long as Israel has occupied the Syrian Golan, the Government has cooperated and coordinated closely and fully with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDOF command.

Syria again stresses that the occupied Syrian Golan is an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. UNDOF is therefore present on a temporary basis until such a time as Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan comes to an end and Israel withdraws from the entire occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981).

2. The Syrian Government has always complied with the authoritative international resolutions and the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. Israel, however, has refused to implement United Nations resolutions requiring it to withdraw from the entire occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, and has continued to violate the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. For instance, Israel has deployed heavy weapons and materiel and advanced technology near and along the ceasefire line. It has abducted civilians near the technical fence on the liberated side and interrogated them inside occupied territory, releasing them on dirt tracks that are strewn with landmines. Israel also continues to provide all forms of direct support to armed terrorist groups in the area of separation. In the report under consideration, the Secretary-General states that interaction and cooperation between Israel and armed terrorist groups took place on six separate occasions. Indeed, the Syrian Government has confirmed intelligence stating that Israel interacts with the terrorist groups on a daily basis. The Security Council must shoulder its responsibilities under its own resolutions, particularly those relating to counter-terrorism, and take immediate measures against Israel and the other States that are

Please recycle

supporting and financing those terrorist groups, as well as those States that are providing them with safe haven. Turning a blind eye to the risks posed by the presence and activities of those groups in the area of separation will only exacerbate instability there and throughout the region, in addition to putting the security and safety of United Nations personnel at risk.

3. Mindful of its obligations, Syria has exercised the utmost restraint in responding to the activities of armed terrorist groups in the UNDOF area of operation. It understands the nature of the region and the obligations that are in force. It reiterates that the actions of Syrian law enforcement forces are a response to an emergency situation arising from exceptional circumstances, namely the presence of terrorist groups carrying out terrorist activities in the area of separation.

4. Syria reiterates that the camps on the ceasefire line, which are purportedly intended for humanitarian purposes, are in fact logistical bases for armed terrorist groups to transport, ammunition, materiel and weapons from occupied territory into Syria.

5. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic finds it deplorable that, in its report, the Secretariat refers to the armed terrorist groups in the area of disengagement as non-State armed opposition groups and also as terrorist groups included on the terrorism lists of the Security Council. The Government stresses that all of the armed men are working either for the Nusrah Front or for Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), with support from Israel.

6. The Syrian Government again stresses that UNDOF must continue to fulfil its mandate within the context of Security Council resolutions and the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. Syria undertakes to continue supporting UNDOF as it has done over the years, so that UNDOF personnel can return to their positions in the area of separation securely, in cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government, and fulfil their mandate as prescribed. The Syrian Government has provided UNDOF with all forms of support, so that it can redeploy in the area of separation after that area has been purged of armed terrorist groups. It has facilitated UNDOF reconnaissance patrols in the northern part of the area of separation, whereas Israel has continued to support all armed terrorist groups, thus impeding the Force's return to the area of separation.

7. Syria wishes again to emphasize the need to address the fundamental reason for the presence of UNDOF in the region, namely, the continuing Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan. The Security Council must take immediate action to end the Israeli occupation of the occupied Syrian Golan in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981), and to compel Israel to withdraw fully from the Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.